Fruit cultivation in Punjab

5045. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether due to lack of processing facilities in Punjab, prices fall considerably during peak harvesting season, thereby making fruit-cultivation unviable compelling the farmers to uproot their fruit-plants; and

(b) if so, what are the fruits which face such situation and what measures Government propose to take to protect fruit-plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM) : (a) Fall in prices is very common during peak harvesting season for all seasonal crops. However few farmers have uprooted their fruit plants in Punjab, which constitute a meagre portion of the area under fruit crops.

(b) Only grapes, kinnow and pear fruit plants were uprooted. The Government has taken up following measures to create infrastructure facilities for handling horticulture crops including fruits which will be helpful in protecting the fruit plants :

(i) Central Government is implementing a Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) under which the Central Government and the State Government together intervene in the market procurement at a determined price for specific quantities at the request of the State Government. The loss is borne by both the Governments on 50:50 basis, if any.

(ii) The State Government is trying to establish foreign aided projects on fruit processing specially grapes under Punjab Agro Industries Corporation.

(iii) Punjab Agro Industries Corporation is pursuing actively to find out solution of the processing problems such as bitterness in kinnow juice, unsuitability of Perlette variety of grapes for processing and flat juice of pears.

(iv) National Horticulture Board is also providing assistance to the State for development infrastructure for handling packing, grading, precooling, marketing etc. and to help farmers to save the post harvest losses and obtain better prices for their product.

(v) Ministry of Commerce through APEDA is promoting export of fruits.

(vi) Ministry of Food Processing Industries is also providing assistance for establishing fruit and vegetable processing units in the States.

Requirement of wheat

5046. SYED SIBTEY RAZI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the requirement of wheat for different States and Union Territories during 1994-95 has since been received from all the Staes and Union Territories;

(b) if so, the detail thereof, State and Union Territory-wise;

(c) whether Government are able to supply wheat to all the States and Union Territories as per their respective demand; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the alternative arrangements likely to be made in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM) : (a) to (d) Allotments for Public Distribution System to all States/Union Territories are made on a month to month basis, based on the demands received from various States/Union Territories, their relative needs, stocks in the Central Pool, seasonal availability, etc. Despite being requested by the Govt. of India, only a few States and Union Territories give their demand for wheat and rice under PDS on a yearly basis. Others give demands on a monthly basis, and few others do not sent in their demands. The lifting of the foodgrains always remain below the quantity allotted to the States/ Union Territories.

A statement indicating the demands received from various State Governments/ Union Trritories is annexed.